

PLUS Minorities in the Military: What You Should Know Before You Join

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INFORMER

APRIL, 2006

**Special
Feature:
The Future of
Northeastern's
Cultural
Centers**

**Diversity at
Northeastern**
Critical Questions,
Compelling Answers

**The
Struggle
to Rebuild
New Orleans**

APRIL 2006**Inside**

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ONYX

exists to be a voice

for people of the African Diaspora and the greater Boston community in which we reside. The ONYX embraces the unity and values of diversity in both the content of our publication and in the membership of our organization.

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history that is denied to them in most school systems. With my time at Northeastern being the only time when I am almost completely surrounded by people who don't look like me, I have grown to acknowledge the importance of not becoming a stereotype. My success here may lay a path for another student of color to follow. My time at Northeastern, however brief, has proven that the Diaspora represents more than just various shades of brown; it represents trend starters, international entertainers, fashion icons and faces of revolution and justice. Countless times throughout history and even now in the present we have proven our power to take the world by storm, though our accomplishments and the importance of them often manage to recede into the background.

Through history we have long been victims of racism and discrimination but with education we will begin to break the chains that hold us down. Every

time one of us graduates from college and enters the workforce as a degree-wielding professional, we become stronger. We give those who don't have faith in us a reason to feel ashamed of their assumptions that we can't make it. It is our duty to never allow ourselves to perpetuate the stereotypes that too many people of influence, people who look like you and me, constantly exude.

After speaking with too many teens that are profoundly aware of the apathetic attitudes demonstrated by their own parents and school staff, I believe it is my duty to start the path of academic and professional success. I

believe when they witness our success at any higher education institution, it gives them the incentive and confidence to become more than the cycle of disparity and racism has designed for them.

So please, as you continue to move up the ladder of personal and professional success, do your part to inspire, educate and motivate.

As the end of spring semester approaches, I can't help but look toward the future with excitement and anticipation.

Many of us will still be at Northeastern taking summer classes or going on Co-op, but many of you will be saying farewell. For those who will be graduating, I wish you the best of luck and sincerely hope that your experience at Northeastern has made you a better person both mentally and professionally.

We, as students of color, may have our gripes about the Northeastern system. However, I stand as a testament that though I represent an overwhelming minority group, I know that I have learned to love and appreciate my heritage more than ever. Being one of the few students of color in my classes has taught me to appreciate the profound beauty and uniqueness of my ancestors.

Northeastern has ignited a fire in me, broadening my understanding of the value of learning and preserving my history and of being one of the people to teach my children the deep histories of our roots, a

Deeply Inspired

IVELISSE SANCHEZ
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Dear Kat, *You* have been Editor-in-Chief of *The Onyx Informer* for the last three years and throughout your tenure you have endured many trials and tribulations, but still managed to gracefully get through the storm. The entire Onyx crew, those of the past and present, know what special qualities you hold. You are an amazingly patient and giving person, oftentimes doing more than your fair share to make sure the Onyx came out, even if it was a few days or a few weeks late. This being your last year with us, we all wanted to thank you for your hard work, dedication and patience.

Throughout the time we have known you, we learned to love you and respect you. We have learned to appreciate you as more than our superior, but as someone who will always be there when you can and let us find our own way while gently pushing us in the right direction. We know the Onyx has been your "labor of love" for the last several years and we will commit ourselves to making sure the Onyx maintains its legacy and place within the Northeastern community. It is because of your dedication that we have come this far.

When you receive your diploma and embark on your journey through life, know that you will be in our thoughts and our prayers.

**Your love and insight
is truly a blessing.**

"A queen does not always wear a regal crown. Her royalty emanates from the spirit within her." J.S.

**Love You Always,
ONYX STAFF**

movies
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theater
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tv

by CANDICE SPRINGER

CROSSING THE COLOR LINE

In his new song "Race Card," Ice Cube says, "Please don't believe the hype. Everything in the world ain't black and white. Everybody ain't a stereotype. Just because I look wrong I'm about to do right. Did you get your race card?"

It's unsettling to think that in a country where so many races and cultures exist, we are still unable to understand each other. Although many of us judge others based on the stereotypes we've seen and heard in the media and elsewhere, Ice Cube sets out to prove that everyone does not fit into these classic clichés. Though this fact should be obvious, extreme ignorance, from both the black and white communities in America, still persists.

"Black. White," a new reality TV show from executive producers Matt Alvarez, RJ Cutler and Ice Cube, has premiered as an effort to possibly help enlighten those who live in the dark. Two families will trade races for six weeks in the ultimate test to see if they can gain a greater understanding of one another.

It's an interesting premise, no doubt about that. But the question of "Black. White." is not whether it will entertain viewers, but rather if it can surpass the typical reality show fakeness and force the participants to learn something.

The show, which premiered on March 8, introduced us to Bruno, Carmen, and Rose Wurgel, a white upper middle class family from California, and Brian, René, and Nick Sparks, a black middle class family from Georgia.

Part one of the experiment requires the families to be transformed into the opposite race everyday over the next six weeks and see what it feels like to walk in another race's shoes. Their initial experiences have already laid the ground work for future revelations. The most profound moment happened when both sets of parents sat in extremely uncomfortable focus groups with other white and black individuals to talk about the troubles they face with race on a day to day basis. Bruno and Carmen Wurgel, disguised as a black couple, had to listen as black individuals candidly spoke about the racial prejudices they constantly feel everyday while Brian and René Sparks, disguised as a white couple, sat uncomfortably silent as the white focus group expressed their aggravation with blacks thinking all white people are racist.

For the first time the families were forced to hear from the other side of the color line and learn how each other's race is perceived, something they had not done before the show. The children, Nick and Rose, who must hang out with kids of the opposite race, have also begun to see how stereotypes affected their views of each other.

The revelations of this experiment continue, as the families are required to live together; to learn how to act like the opposite race and to openly discuss their day to day experiences with one another.

But tensions are quickly beginning to mount as the Sparks are baffled by Bruno's ignorantly excessive use of the "N word" and his eagerness to be called it when

disguised as a black man. It seems like Bruno, the father of the Wurgel household, is going to need the most work in the house as he continues to stir controversy over his belief that racism does not strongly exist and that everything can be solved if black people let the ignorance of others roll off their backs.

However and more importantly, it is evident that the families have the potential to change, for now they are forced to abandon their assumptions in an effort to understand and ultimately respect one another. Though their arguing may at times leave them feeling uncomfortable with each other, their experiences will most likely be beneficial in the end.

"Black. White." is an extremely important show for the times as it is an honest portrait of race relations in America. If you have friends of other races you know it's not always easy relating to one another. This is the message of "Black. White." While it is exciting to see how the families will react to each other in their new skins, it is also an inspiring way of challenging them to look beyond the stereotypes and focus on what is really going on in our society; that will be the greatest lesson that the participants, and those watching the show, could ever learn from this social experiment.

"Black. White." may be just what our society needs. It is a show that encourages people to talk honestly and candidly about race and racial stereotypes, which could ultimately create a desire for people to find out who someone is regardless of the color of their skin.

"Black. White." airs Wednesdays at 10 pm on F/X

movies
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music

by KRISA ALLEN

ONE SONG AT A TIME

Today on radio and television networks like JAMN' 94.5 and BET, artists who have real messages in their music and lyrics are too few and far between. Too often their songs are about booty shaking and money making. However, one group, breaking away from that tirade of falsity, is an internationally acclaimed musical organization known as The Foundation. This group has been praised for their musical creativity paired with relevant lyrics that the everyday man can really relate to. Pulling from their experiences growing up here in Boston and their cultural diversity (Puerto Rico, Liberia, and Guatemala), The Foundation utilizes their music to address issues of injustice and oppression. Not only do their lyrical and musical abilities have the power to stimulate your mind, but their philanthropic nature makes them even more valuable and unique.

Many of their performances are dedicated to fundraising for various causes such as Darfur Peace and Development to help with the efforts in Sudan. Their dedication to the community and their initiatives to tackle issues like racism has been so strong that the city of Boston recognized February 27th as "Foundation Day" in 2003.

The Foundation is comprised of three members: Eroc, Optimus and DJ El. The group was formed in 2001 after multiple collaborations between Eroc and Optimus. The two met while

Eroc was doing a radio performance where Optimus was a radio personality. Both say that the vibe and connection was just there. After hooking up, the Foundation's first recording session led them to Manhattan, New York, where they recorded their first song "No More Power" with E. Pabon. From that point forward the group's forte was apparent and is constantly pushing the standards of excellence.

To date they have performed at local clubs, colleges, rallies, and protests all across the globe. Their passports boast stamps from several different countries including South Africa, England, France, Cuba, Israel, and Palestine. It's a wonder that they never tire or lose their drive.

The Foundation remarked, "If not us, who? And if who wants to do it too, the more the merrier. In unity there's strength. Challenging -isms, racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, criticism, capitalism, is a 9am to 9am career, a 24-hour-

a-day profession. [We've] got no choice because we're at the receiving end of a lot of those -isms."

They are dedicated to making the world a better place and have an unwavering commitment to overcome prejudices and biases. They want the future generations to live in a world free of oppression and injustice and understand that the first step to eradicating the countless -isms is through action and self-evaluation.

The Foundation expressed, "We someday would like to have children and want them to inherit the earth in a better position than we did. So our options are to fight for freedom in every area of human relations 'til it becomes addictive and that addiction turns into a lifestyle and that lifestyle becomes one that others would like to emulate, imitate, replicate or create their own."

So what may the future hold for this riveting explosion of culture, music, and advocacy? In their words, "Our ultimate goal is to free the world from oppression, one song at a time."

You can pick up a copy of their most recent albums entitled "Unreleased Classics!" and "Greatest Hits" at **Massive Records** (1105 Mass Ave., Cambridge, MA) or at one of their performances.

They are scheduled to next appear at "Wax Off DJ Battle" to be held at The Paradise Lounge April 23rd. The DJ Battle will be followed with performances by Sekret Society, Foundation Movement, Awkward Landing, Virtuoso, Fake The Snake, Golden Brown & RPSHOP.

For more information about The Foundation and their upcoming performances please visit their website at <http://www.foundationhiphop.net/home.html>



Foundation members, Eroc and Optimus passionately perform their songs under a clear blue sky.

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Souls of Black Folk

music

by IVELISSE SANCHE

The Souls of Black Folk event held in February was more than a Black History Month celebration. It was a show that paid tribute to legendary Black artists such as Langston Hughes, Billy Holiday and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, who made great contributions to the Harlem Renaissance. The show, revealing the profound influence that Black people have on American culture, featured an array of performances including a live jazz band, a rendition of Billy Holiday's "Strange Fruit," phenomenal tap dancers, a gospel choir and powerful spoken word artists. Each and every performer proved they spent hours preparing for this night, making sure that if they were chosen to represent the Souls of Black Folk, they were going to do it right.

Monica Milton, singer of Billy Holiday's "Strange Fruit," says she was honored to be a part of the event. "It was moving for me," she said. "I felt honored to pay homage to someone like Billy Holiday and I felt that everyone did an excellent job representing the different aspects of the Harlem Renaissance." As Monica sang, the disturbing im-

ages of those who were ruthlessly lynched rendered the crowd silent.

The show began with opening remarks from Northeastern Black Student Association (NBSA) president, William Reece, and followed with storyteller and professor, Onawumi Jean Moss. Ms. Onawumi entertained the audience as she enacted the roles of men, women and children. It was not just her storytelling that amused the audience. When she appeared on stage with a beautiful gold sequined vest that draped to her knees, audience members began shouting, "Check you out!" When Ms. Onawumi did a 360 and said, "Yeah baby! Uh huh, I gotta look good for my people," the audience immediately burst into laughter.

As the crowd continued to grow, it was evident that the event wasn't just for students of color. Mark Harvey, staff member in the Office of Special Support Services, believed it was important that the entire Northeastern community- faculty, staff and students- attended the event.

"This project was aimed to educate and entertain," he said. "Everyone was more than welcome to attend to learn about Black contributions to American history."

Jeremiah Shepherd, Assistant Director in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, felt it was important not to undermine the amazing talents and dedication of everyone who made the show a reality and reiterated his respect and admiration for all the performers including those of the Duke Ellington Memorial Band.

Leonard Brown, music professor at Northeastern and internationally traveled musician, felt the

show was everything that it should have been. "The title Souls of Black Folk was right on the money," he said. "Du Bois himself understood the power of music in the lives of Black people...and anything that I can do to celebrate Black culture, I will do. But these events don't need to just happen in February, we need events like this 24/7, 365 days a year."

The show concluded with tap legends, Dianne Walker and Jimmy Slyde. Both helped to choreograph this portion of the event and bring together an amazing group of tap dancers. Each dancer showcased their talents in front of an audience that couldn't suppress their "ohhh's" and "ahhh's." However, it was the performance of Jimmy Slyde, a man who appeared extremely fragile with old age, who brought the crowd to their feet as he literally danced in circles around the younger performers. No one held back their laughter, applause and admiration for him. It was this atmosphere of love that made the show such a success.

From the performance of the John D. O'Bryant African American Institute Unity Gospel Ensemble to the powerful joint performance by Northeastern student, Jhanea Williams, and high school student, Sofia Snow, the show could not have been better. Mark Harvey believes that though the show demanded hours of hard work, the pay off was worth it.

"Because people showed up and supported the event and enjoyed themselves, I am happy," he said.



The Duke Ellington Memorial Band plays a tribute to the legendary icons of the Harlem Renaissance.

Photo By Craig Bailey

Jeremiah Shepherd

Words of a Renaissance Man

"With spoken word you don't have to have this little measure note keeping you on a bar," he said "I just feel like there's no such thing as grammar. There's no such thing as punctuation—you're just free."

spotlight

by SOPHIA DAUPHIN

Jeremiah Shepherd is a Northeastern alum and is currently the Assistant Director at the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Jeremiah is a friendly, welcoming, warm and funny man. He has an old soul and a beautiful voice that delivers meaningful lyrical content. He draws his inspiration from various artists including Anthony Hamilton, who reminds him of himself, the Roots, and his favorite poets, Reggie Gibson and Thema Bryant.

When I entered Jeremiah's office, I was welcomed with a huge smile and I soon found that he is not your typical NU staff member. Rather, he is a man with the ability to perform soul-stirring poetry, better known as spoken word. For this reason, I was both honored and excited to speak to a man with a unique and powerful skill.

Jeremiah Shepherd has been performing spoken word for seven years. It has always been an interest of his, but after the death of his younger brother, which he described as a personally "traumatic

loss," he stopped performing for two years because he "didn't really feel too creative after that." Surprisingly, it was not until the Souls of Black Folk event held in February that Jeremiah came back to the stage. Now he is beginning to pick up where he left off.

Although spoken word is his specialty, Jeremiah asserts that he can also sing and is currently taking guitar lessons. He is building onto his repertoire of artistic abilities saying, "I write, I sing, and when people ask for a title, I just tell them I am an artist because I feel like it captures all the things I like to do." Since his college days he has been writing poetry. However, he did not know anything about spoken word or performing. Two Northeastern alumni, Iyeoka Okoawo and Amy Morgan, introduced him to this new form of art and encouraged him to become the talented performer that he is.

Iyeoka, an established spoken word performer, brought him to her shows and later became his mentor. "I would have to say that she would be the poet that kinda got me my break," he said.

Jeremiah explained how she encouraged him to join a local poetry group called Black Out Boston in 1999. "I told her that I wrote poetry and she brought me to a show," he said. "We ended up joining Black Out Boston all in the same night." He was a member of this group for about three years.

Jeremiah seems to be a man inspired by life itself. He said, "There really isn't one thing that moves me. It's whatever the theme that I am being asked to write about or perform that drives the poetry. I feel like any good artist will tell you that they don't write the poetry, they just kinda let it come to them."

Jeremiah is not the kind of poet who opens his notebook and simply writes. He says sitting at a table to write a poem is not the best way for him; instead seeing something might inspire him to write a poem

about a person who is lost and frantic on the subway and seeking to find the right directions. Jeremiah feels that spoken word allows him to freely express the ideas that come to him. Jeremiah said that his favorite performance was in 2000 at the legendary House of Blues in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This is when his first CD entitled "The Joint" was released. He says this was his most memorable performance because the idea that he and his friends talked about became a reality and they were given the opportunity to showcase their talents where hundreds of phenomenal musicians and artists also performed their work. "I think that was the best time I ever sang," he said. "The best time I ever did a poem...I was in my element that night and I remember that to this day."

Jeremiah added that it feels good to see people enjoy his lyrics and melodies and through spoken word he is able to accomplish a talent he once sat back and watched.

He advised that anyone with a passion to write to do exactly that: write.

"Get yourself a little notebook," he said. "We have been brainwashed to think that it's [poetry] supposed to be this nice little rhyme, that it makes sense and it's not revolutionary, that you're supposed to make everyone happy. No. Poetry is the one true art form that allows your soul to speak. The moment you start to confine it, making it rhyme and listening to what your professors are telling you what it is supposed to be, it begins to lose its true form, which is you. You give the poem definition, so write."

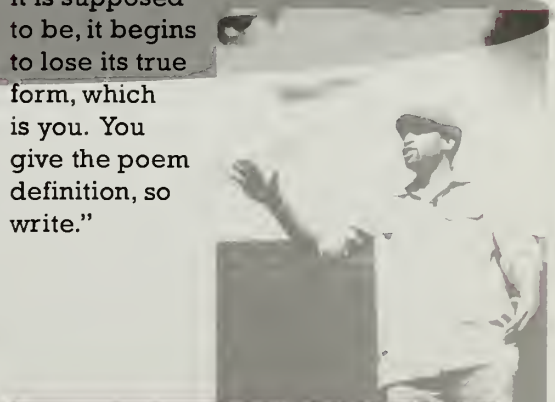


Photo By Craig Bailey

ONYX

MARSHA WHITE

Octavia E. Butler: Science Fiction Pioneer

One of the first Black pioneers of science-fiction books, Octavia E. Butler inspired writers nationwide. Born in Pasadena, California, June 22, 1947, her mother raised her in an integrated neighborhood after her father passed away. From her mother's occupation as a maid, Octavia learned the value of work and understood the concept of work ethic. Octavia E. Butler passed away on February 24, 2006 at the age of 58 from a head injury associated with a fall, but her legendary works will continue to inspire.

At age 12, she was diagnosed with Dyslexia and to escape isolation from her peers, she commenced writing novels that transcended beyond the imagination. Her relationship with science fiction was in part due to an encounter with viewing *Devil Girl From Mars*, a science fiction movie that motivated her to transcribe her own work.

While pursuing further education at California State University, she took side classes at UCLA, and her experience with creative writing workshops furthered her devotion to fictional works of literature. Her first story, *Crossover*, was issued in 1971. One of her Afro-

centric novels, *Kin-dred*, published in 1979, was focused on an African American woman who was transported through different time dimensions ranging from the Southern post-Slavery and back to the present time of 1976. This novel reigns as the most famous of all her stories, selling over a 75,000 copies worldwide. Not only was she multi-faceted in numerous components of literature but she entertained an extremely diverse audience.

Due to her exceptional compositions, many took acclaim to her fascinating works by awarding her with high honors. Butler won extraordinary literary awards including the Hugo Award for her Short Story, Speech

Sound, in 1984 and in addition, both the Nebula and Hugo Award for her novella, *Blood Child*, in 1985. The Hugo and Nebula awards are the highest awards in the science-fiction literary realm and are judged by other science fiction writers and fans. In 1995, Butler won a "genius grant" from the Mac Arthur Foundation which provided her with close to 300,000 dollars. Her greatest achievement included the Lifetime Achievement Award offered to her by the PEN American Center, which recognizes writers that publish outstanding non-fictional works, in October 2000.

In memory of Octavia E. Butler, we should learn that though we may suffer from limitations and/or illness, in her case, dyslexia, we should always use it as our motivation to strengthen ourselves and our community.

KAT NOEL **And Do It Better He Did:**
Nov. 30, 1912 - March 7, 2006

What is to become of a Black boy who has a life ahead of him but many obstacles to overcome? Better yet, how about one born in 1912 into a poor family as the youngest of 15 children? By today's statistics, he'd be neglected by the Department of Social Services and eventually lost in the criminal justice system. Unfortunately, Gordon Roger Alexander Buchanan Parks' early teen years do read like a statistic.

Deeply affected by the death of his mother, Parks dropped out of high school and was sent to live with his sister in St. Paul, Minnesota. However, his stay there was short lived for in a few weeks he was evicted due to clashes with his brother-in-law. Young, Black and homeless, Parks found himself sleeping in trolley cars and loitering in pool halls. Needing to feed and shelter himself, he took odd jobs playing piano in a brothel and working as a waiter on a luxury train.

Captivated in 1938 by photos of migrant workers featured in a magazine, Parks was inspired to purchase his first camera for \$12.50 at a pawnshop. A photo clerk, greatly impressed with Parks' first prints, promised the young photographer an exhibit. Six weeks later, Parks' photos were displayed in the window of downtown Minneapolis' Kodak store. His work caught the eye of Marva Louis, boxer Joe Louis' wife, who encouraged him to move to Chicago to work in fashion photography.

A 1941 exhibition of these photographs earned Parks a photography fellowship with the Farm Security Administration (FSA) as an apprentice under Roy Stryker.

Working as an apprentice was difficult for Parks as he despised the injustices he encountered in the nation's capital. Stryker's response to Parks was sending

Being the first recognized Black woman of science fiction, Octavia Butler is a legend. With her untimely death, the Octavia E. Butler Memorial Scholarship was formed. The scholarship funds are provided by the Carl Brandon Society to aid minority writers in pursuing fields in literature.

REMEMBERS

him to view the works of Dorothea Lange, Ben Shahn and Jack Delano. Through their photographs, Parks found images of homeless migrant workers and emaciated faces of people suffering through the Depression. It was then Parks realized the effectiveness of capturing the images of victims instead of their perpetrators.

Still yearning to depict discrimination with his camera, Stryker advised him to speak to a Black cleaning lady, Ms. Ella Watson, who worked in the FSA building. Parks learned that Ms. Watson supported her daughter and grandchildren on her annual salary of \$1,080.

Parks took several photographs of Watson including one of his best known photographs, *American Gothic*. The simple yet profound photo depicts Watson standing in front of the American flag with a mop in one hand and a broom in the other.

Eventually moving to Harlem, Parks became a freelance fashion photographer for *Vogue* magazine. However, after a 1948 photo essay on Red Jackson, a young Harlem gang leader, Parks acquired a photography and writing position with *LIFE* magazine. With this achievement, Parks became the first African American to write for *LIFE*. For the next 20 years he photographed everything from Broadway features to racial segregation, poverty and even portraits of Stokely Carmichael, Muhammad Ali, Malcolm X and Barbara Streisand.

In 1961, Parks did a series of photo essays for *LIFE* about the slums located on a desolate mountainside just outside Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Focusing his photo essay on Flavio da Silva, a poor 12 year old boy who

was afflicted with tuberculosis, Parks was struck by the family's dependency on Flavio.

Once the story ran, *LIFE* readers contributed nearly \$30,000 to bring Flavio to America to cure his tuberculosis. Flavio was cured within two years and upon his return to Brazil, Parks bought the boy's father a new car from the donated money and *LIFE* donated \$25,000 to help the family purchase a new home.

Photography and writing weren't the only fields Parks conquered. He also had a flourishing film career. In the 1950s he worked with several Hollywood productions as a consultant and also directed the National Educational Television's commissioned documentaries on the lives of Black people in the ghetto. He eventually became Hollywood's first major Black director with the film adaptation of his autobiographical novel, *The Learning Tree*. Parks also composed the film's

musical scores and screenplay.

What many remember Parks for is his contribution to the "blaxploitation" genre with the 1971 film *Shaft* and its sequel *Shaft's Big Score*. The films, *Shaft* and *The Learning Tree*, were deemed by the United States' Library of Congress as "culturally significant" and were preserved in the National Film Registry.

Gordon Parks was and has done so much. He composed the music and text for Martin, a ballet dedicated to Martin Luther King, Jr. He became a self-taught jazz pianist and he is co-founder of *Essence* Magazine.

Gordon Parks was a man who was inspired by his mother, a woman who never wanted any of her children to complain about not accomplishing something due to the color of their skin. Mrs. Parks told them, "If a white boy can do it, then you can do it too- And do it better, or don't come home.' And do it better he did!

Gordon Parks didn't simply defeat the odds stacked up against him, he rose far above them, setting the bar for us all.

What many remember Parks for is his contribution to the "blaxploitation" genre with the 1971 film *Shaft* and its sequel *Shaft's Big Score*. The films, *Shaft* and *The Learning Tree*, were deemed by the United States' Library of Congress as "culturally significant" and were preserved in the National Film Registry.

**A home completely destroyed by
Hurricane Katrina**



The Struggle to

Photo Courtesy of Breaking Ground

“George Bush doesn’t care about Black people!”

This phrase, well known throughout the Black communities in America, was said by rapper/producer Kanye West as he reacted to the response, or lack thereof, from the government to Hurricane Katrina. Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, most notably New Orleans, Louisiana, more than six months ago, completely destroying the lives of millions in her path. Although months have passed, relief efforts to rebuild the “Chocolate City” are still in the beginning stages. Many who have gone to New Orleans in recent weeks can’t help but wonder if the hesitance to rebuild the Ninth Ward, predominantly populated by poor blacks, is a genuine result of budget crunches or an intentional strategy to keep them from coming back.

Alexis Gumbs, who volunteered in New Orleans in March, says this tragedy is one that she cannot distance herself from. “What I saw was more than I expected,” she said. “It’s complete devastation...the tourist areas of Bourbon Street and the French Quarters are fully restored but the poor residential areas, where mainly Black people live, looks like it was bombed yesterday.”

Images of the havoc Katrina caused were on the front page of every newspaper and in the forefront of every newscast but, as what often happens with tragedies, the stories of those affected have begun to recede into the background. Immediately after the crisis, cries of racism and discrimination rang throughout Black communities across America.

Shortly after Katrina subsided, the media frenzy began. Newspapers reported that black residents of New Orleans were “looting” grocery

stores while their white counterparts were simply “trying to survive.” The images replayed on television screens showed hundreds of blacks begging to be saved. Images of black people trapped on their rooftops became synonymous with Kanye West’s remark about the sentiments of George Bush.

Recently, a committee elected to investigate the government’s response to the disaster found that the government’s inadequate communication system, both on the state and federal levels, had a major impact on the relief efforts. It is reported that several warnings about Katrina’s power to destroy the levees in New Orleans went unheeded and an evacuation announcement occurred too late. Subsequently, the people left to fend for themselves were predominantly poor and black.

Jurina Hill, who also volunteered in New Orleans, believes the response to Katrina proved racism still exists. “Realizing the extent of the damage, even after all these months, exposes a lot of the racial and social injustices in New Orleans,” she said. “I want people to know that people of color are still being discriminated against; we don’t have equal opportunities.”

Bush, when asked whether race played a role in the negligent response to Katrina, vehemently denied the accusations saying, “You can call me anything you want, but do not call me a racist!” Still, Kerul Dyer, Special Events and Outreach Coordinator for the New Orleans’ based relief organization Common Ground, has her doubts.

“The residents here [Ninth Ward] are not getting the services that they need,” she said. “We are

not a charity organization. We work in solidarity with residents who want to return but if they are not getting what they need, things like health-care, water, and transportation, then the rebuilding process takes much longer.”

Common Ground seeks to offer hope to the residents of New Orleans and provide a way to supply the resources they need to rebuild their lives. Volunteers range in age and profession but the need for skilled workers is extremely urgent.

“We need engineers to investigate the levees,” Kerul said. “We need ecologists and environmental activists to investigate the conditions. We need professionals.” She believes it is important that people understand that the displaced residents are not helpless. They can rebuild their lives on their own if given the necessary resources.

Both Alexis and Jurina volunteered with Common Ground and described their experience as extremely moving and humbling. They both believe helping out with the relief efforts is a personal responsibility because of the discrimination against the poor Black residents of New Orleans. Volunteering became their way of fighting for social justice.

“Everyone was working together toward a common goal,” Jurina said. “Everyone was there doing something from the heart and not for the money. We became a community that doesn’t thrive on capitalism rather on support and kindness.”

Alexis added that she was just honored she was able to help. “I was able to use my talents for something constructive,” she said. “I used them to help in the relief efforts.”

Rebuild

by IVELISSE SANCHEZ

New Orleans

Minorities in the Military: What You Should Know Before You Join

by MARGARET KAMARA



"I enlisted in the military in May 2002, partly because of 9/11 and at the time I had no real direction in my life. I was lied to by the recruiters right off the bat when I was told that I was going to be a health care specialist. That turned out to be a combat medic."

Michael Harmon, Iraq Veterans Against the War, from the "Socialist Worker," March 17, 2006

The excerpt above was not fabricated in any way to cater to the purpose of this article. It was not published to scare you about the military or to portray it in a negative way. This article is about the genuine concern many of us have about the younger generation of minorities—Asians, Blacks and Latinos—who are thinking about joining the military. Like Mike, many of our brothers and sisters are enlisting in the military for guidance and direction in life and to get funds for school without any true knowledge of what it really means to enlist.

Two hundred years ago, allowing a person of color to become a soldier was rare, and done only during a time of need, a time of war. Thus, when the opportunity arose our brothers took advantage of the chance. They shed their blood, sweat and tears from the Revolutionary War to the Vietnam War and to the Gulf War. They hoped their contributions would be appreciated so they too, like other white military officers, would be treated as first class U.S. citizens. Today, though we may not be fully recognized as equals to Whites, minorities—Asians, Blacks and Latinos—are now the faces of the military.

Our youth have become the main targets for recruiters as they are more vulnerable to enlist in the military. Asians (and Pacific Islanders), with a civilian population of 6 percent, make up 5 percent of the military's active-duty. Blacks, with a 17 percent civilian population, make up 16 percent and Latinos, with an 11 percent civilian population, make up 11 percent. Many of these recruits are in the Navy and the Marines.

Because of last year's decline in minority recruits and recruits overall, the military's 2006 goal is more aggressive than previous years, and most notably, more aggressive toward Black and Latino youth. With more than 2,300 U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq, recruiters are struggling to fill the gaps. Last year was the first time in a decade that the Army National Guard did not meet its goal.

It has been proven that the most targeted communities are those with working class or low income residents and high schools where students are less likely to go to college. Dave Griesmer, spokesman for Marine Corp Recruiting, was quoted in the Los Angeles Times' April 5, 2005 article "Military Recruiters Targeting Minority Teens" as saying, "You're

not going to waste your resources if you'll save a market that is not going to produce...if 95% of kids in [an] area go to college, recruiters need to prioritize. A recruiter is going to decide where the best market is."

A portion of the new recruiting, marketing and communication skills tactics have been established from the military recruiting handbook, "Army School Recruiting Program Handbook." But many of the tactics have been from President George W. Bush and are directly targeted toward students.

Presently, recruiters are attending special recruitment trainings that can take up to seven weeks. In these trainings, recruiters are taught to familiarize themselves not only with the students but with the parents, school staff and coaches as well. It has been reported that doughnuts and coffee are brought in for faculty once a month and recruiters are encouraged to attend parent-teacher conferences, chaperoned functions and cultural/heritage awareness events.

Three years ago, the army's first televised commercial specifically targeting young black men aired. It showed a young, attractive black soldier struggling through an ob-

"Money should not be a main reason for joining the military..."

Stephen Hunter, former ROTC student

stacle course, and the message was: "The Army provides its soldiers with strength and perseverance for life."

Other military recruiting advertisements included the phrases, "Accelerate your life," for the Navy and "If you're considering entering the military, why not serve with the elite? You'll train harder than the rest...But you'll earn the right to be called a marine," for the Marine Corp. The glamorization of the military is not left for the imagination.

In 2002, the president passed the "No Child Left Behind," education bill, which provides the military with students' names, home addresses and telephone numbers. It guarantees any school that allows college or job recruiters on their campus to do the same for the military. Many low income minority parents whose children are the main targets for the military, do not have proficient reading and English speaking skills and are not aware they can opt out of providing this information to recruiters. This is simply a matter of read-

ing and understanding the fine print. ing and understanding the fine print.

On March 6, 2006 the Supreme Court ruled the *Rumsfeld v. Forum for Academic and Institutional Rights* constitutional. Through this ruling, the federal government, under the Solomon Amendment (1993), can withhold funding from universities if they refuse

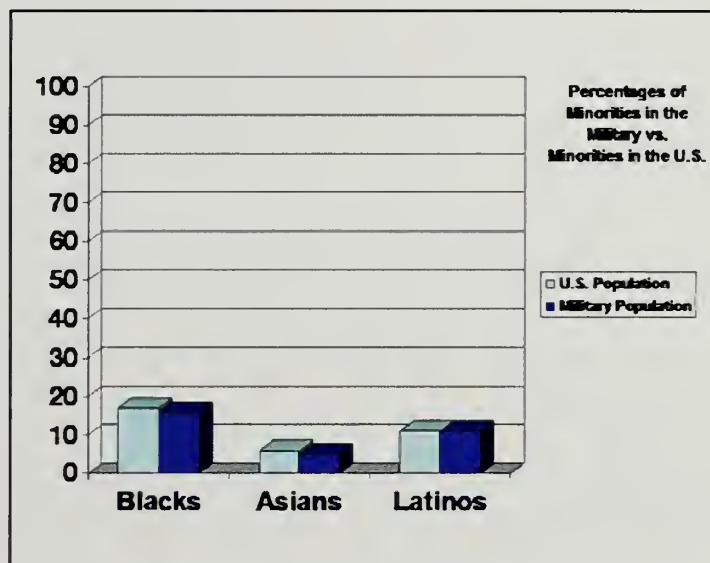
to give military recruiters access to school common areas and students.

So, with so much confusing and muddled information, how does one become a pro at the military decision making process?

John D. Williamson, member of the U.S. Army Reserve and assistant professor of military science at Northeastern, says it requires research you can't find on-line. "Look for a family member or a friend who has experienced or served [in the military] in the past," he said. "Talk to them about what their experiences were like, whether

positive or negative. Talk to an ROTC or enlistment recruiter about the differences [between joining ROTC and enlisting into the military] and policies."

With college tuitions steadily increasing, achieving the dream of a college education becomes challenging. Stephen Hunter, a former ROTC student, says finances shouldn't be a top priority. "Money should not be a main reason for joining the military," he said. "Minorities should seek to join officer programs first ... they will give you money and



job opportunities without you having to join the military."

So, if you have no interest in the military whatsoever, but are in need of tuition assistance, research scholarships, grants, awards or talk to a financial aid advisor first. The military may not be a lifetime commitment, but it does require several years of your life that you can not get back.

Joining the military, whether through enlisting or through an officer program, is a personal choice and like all other decisions has consequences that can be either beneficial or regretful. The military, to our ancestors, was viewed as way to break free from the poverty and discrimination that gripped their lives. Although there are a lot more options and equal opportunities today, it is important that all interested people of color research, research, research, and ask, ask, ask.

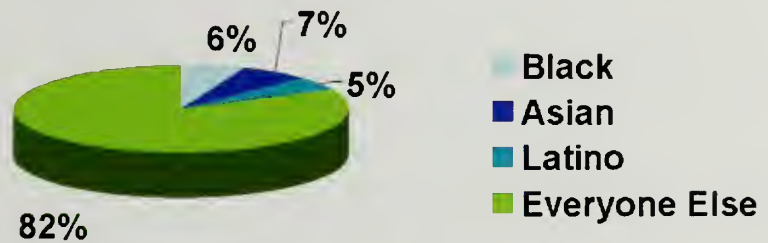


Diversity@ Northeastern

The issue of whether Northeastern is a diverse university has been intensely debated between students and faculty. What do Northeastern students and faculty believe is a comfortable amount of diversity on campus, what are the actual numbers, and how can we as a community come to consensus and impact change?

By Candice Springer

**NU Population: Data from Center for Labor
Market Studies, Northeastern University, 2005**



**What is a
comfortable
amount of
diversity?**

Northeastern prides itself on being an institution that welcomes diversity and commits itself to maintaining a campus full of students with multicultural backgrounds.

The first sentence of Northeastern University's mission statement declares, "Northeastern University is dedicated to providing a broad diversity of students with the benefits of an academic program of the highest quality."

However, the student body recently illustrated that there is a difference of opinion between white and minority students as to what a comfortable amount of diversity is.

In an anonymous survey taken of 40 Northeastern students, half of which were minority students, 60 percent said that Northeastern is a diverse university. Minority students surveyed made up the 40 percent who do not believe that Northeastern is diverse. Khristel Cherismo was one of these students.

"I feel as though we [minority students] are metaphorically like the freckles on a white person's face," she said.

The students were asked to rate Northeastern's diversity on a 1-10 point scale, with 1 being low and 10 being high. The average white student rated the diversity a 7

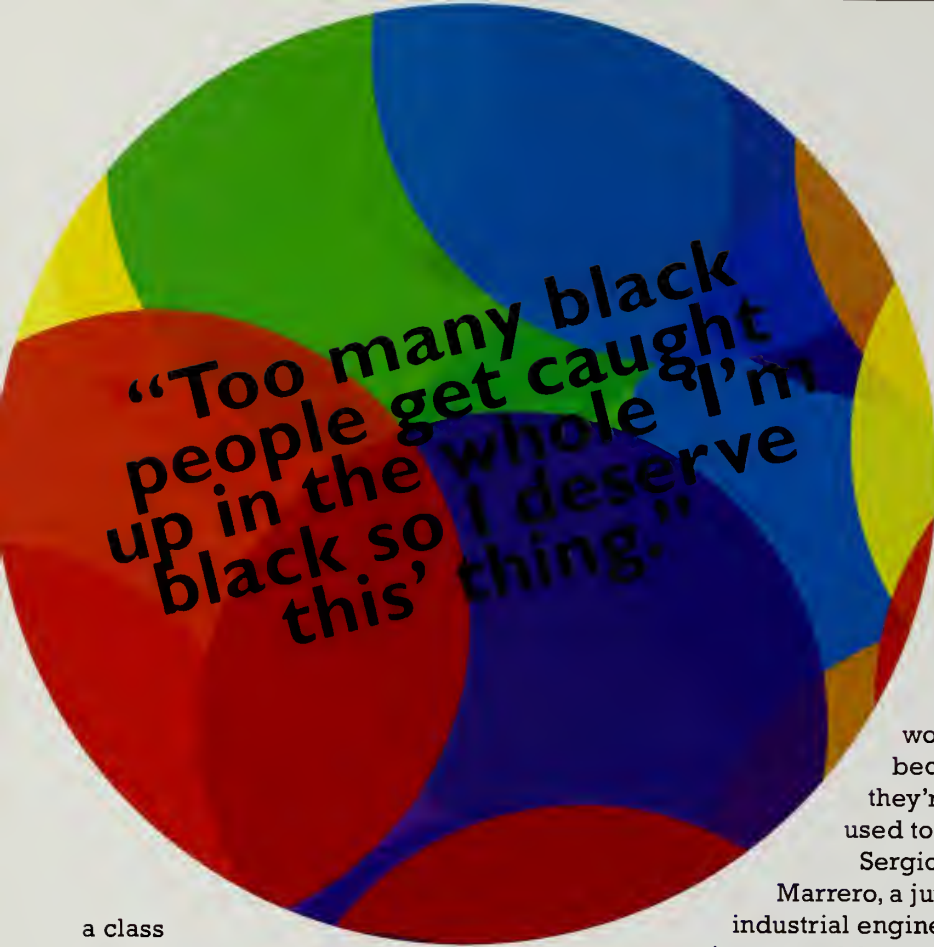
where the average minority student rated the diversity a 4.

There is a clear difference in how white and minority students perceive the amount of diversity on campus. However, when asked to define what diversity is, both white and minority students had similar responses.

"I think Northeastern should be working towards the goal of a campus that is as racially diverse as the world we live in," said one minority student who was surveyed. "I want to look around my classroom and see every color, shape, and size of people."

A white student surveyed had similar thoughts, "Racial diversity is having a wide mix of all possible backgrounds. When you look into

"I think Northeastern should be working towards the goal of a campus that is as racially diverse as the world we live in."



"Too many black people get caught up in the whole 'I'm black so I deserve this' thing."

a class everyone shouldn't look the same."

In 2005, the Boston Globe reported that 6 percent of Northeastern's student body is African-American, 5 percent is Hispanic, and 7 percent is Asian. These numbers were compiled by Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies.

One surveyed white student said he was shocked to hear that African-Americans total only 6 percent of Northeastern's campus.

"Maybe it's because I hang out with people of all backgrounds, but I never imagined there was such a huge difference," he said.

Despite the difference of opinion between white and minority students on how diverse Northeastern is, 90 percent of students surveyed agreed that races stick to their own groups on campus and generally do not communicate with each other.

"Obviously it's something that we're always aware of," said sophomore animation major, Herculano Fernandes, who is also a minority student. "They [white students] probably don't know what's going on. They just sort of sit in their own

world because they're not used to it."
Sergio

Marrero, a junior industrial engineering major, agreed, but said that sticking to similar racial groups hinders more than it helps.

"Whether it is due to comfort or habit, it limits the opportunity to learn about the variety that exists within humanity and inhibits the full breath of the experience we are able to obtain," he said.

90 percent of the minority students surveyed agreed that sensitivity to another's race or culture is lacking on campus, where only 30 percent of white students surveyed saw such a problem. Lula Petty-Edwards, associate dean and director of the African American Institute, said she understands why students feel this way.

"When I look at separation racially now I understand that historically it is more than just natural, normal groups grouping, it grows out of something more pernicious," she said. "It grows out of a practice that decided that one race of people were not people and another group was superior, clearly superior, not in fact, but in belief."

The issue of racial insensitivity has recently been discussed on Northeastern's campus. Earlier in September an event entitled,

"Breaking Bread: Women of Color Dialogue," advertised to "women of color only," upset some members of the Northeastern community, notably a white Student Government Association (SGA) representative. The SGA appealed to the Office of the Provost about the unfair discrimination and subsequently the event was opened to all students.

This controversy was heightened when Dr. Robin Chandler, one of the organizers of the event and director of the woman studies program at Northeastern, was quoted in the Northeastern News as saying, "I think it's a shame that two white students based in white privilege, a lack of awareness of racial issues, and a lack of generosity of spirit complained to the provost and were able, because they were white, to gain admission to the morning session that I was forced to open up."

This outraged many students on campus. One white student wrote an editorial letter addressing Chandler's remarks, claiming her statement "defines racism."

Chandler claims she was misquoted by the NU News, but she was unavailable for comment.

A month after the incident, President Freeland released a statement concerning the event that said, "Limiting attendance at a University-sponsored event based on race, gender or other protected class status is simply not consistent with the university's equal Opportunity Policy. It is also antithetical to our

values and to what Northeastern stands for.”

Chandler’s claim that the protesting students lack “awareness of racial issues” could advance the argument that Northeastern’s community isn’t communicating constructively about race.

“But we’re not helping our cause in a situation such as this,” Cherismo said. “Too many black people get caught up in the whole ‘I’m black so I deserve this’ thing.”

Cherismo believes that Northeastern has yet to achieve a campus that not only understands and welcomes diversity, but also respects a person’s racial background.

“I think that we should learn from our mistakes. I don’t think that people are... and that’s really aggravating and annoying,” she said.

Marrero suggested that more diversity on campus could lead to greater understanding of each other.

“Diversity as a whole adds to the quality of life at Northeastern by bringing people together from various walks of life, causing people not only to realize they are different but embrace and understand each other,” he said.

Other universities in Massachusetts are also struggling to diversify their campuses. In 2003, the Boston Herald reported that only 17 percent of the total number of students enrolled in Massachusetts’ higher education institutions are members of a racial/ethnic or religious minority group. However these numbers are an increase. As compared to 1990, the number of African Americans, ages 18 to 24, in higher education increased 22 percent, the Latino population increased 43 percent, and there was a 46 percent increase in the Asian population.

In Boston, where the minority population has gone from nonexistent in 1970 to almost 41 percent of the total population in 2000, as reported in the Boston Globe, some students can not understand why the college minority enrollment does not increase as fast.

Northeastern boasts cultural study programs and centers for African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and those of Middle Eastern descent, but

70 percent of minority students surveyed at Northeastern felt uncomfortable with the amount of diversity on campus.

“Racial diversity in the student body should represent the world population proportionately. Only then can the university boast to be truly racially diverse,” said one minority student who was surveyed.

Though 100 percent of white students surveyed believed that Northeastern was diverse, they recognized a need for improvement.

“I think we would like to believe that it (diversity) is higher,” said a white student surveyed.

Despite the amount of minorities on campus, Northeastern University was named one of the 150 schools to be “the most inviting to black students” by the “African American Student’s Guide to College,” published by the Princeton Review.

But a lack in diversity also has financial implications. In a 1999 study conducted by Barry Bluestone, an economic professor at Northeastern, and Mary Stevenson, an economic professor at UMass Boston, says college graduates earn about 71 percent more than those without a degree. It seems like college is becoming less of an option and more of a necessity. The lack of diversity on college campuses means more minorities are working for lower incomes than white workers, at least



“I think we would like to believe that [diversity] is higher.”

in Massachusetts.

“I would say that Northeastern aspires diversity,” said Petty-Edwards. “I would say that it has not arrived there perhaps.”

It’s too easy to say that at Northeastern all white students think it is diverse and all minority students do not, but Northeastern’s community agreed that determining the amount of diversity is a subjective task.

“The definition of diversity is subjective depending on whose side you’re looking on,” Fernandes said. Diversity is increasing, but the process is slow. There has to be more that can be done to balance the faces we see on campus. Marrero explained that we definitely need more students as well as faculty on campus. But suggested that maybe there’s another solution.

“Dialog needs to take place on a mass scale were we can hear the perspectives, opinions, and stories from others,” he said. “The conversations work to break down the ‘isms’ that exist, bring people together, agree to disagree and learn we are more alike than we are unlike.”

Out & About: Student Events

HONORING Women of Distinction

Courtesy of Betere Gizaw

The Brothers About Change (BAC) hosted the 2nd annual Women of Distinction award ceremony. This event, designed to honor Black and Latino women for their service to the Northeastern and surrounding community, was held the evening of March 20 at the Raytheon Amphitheater. The Brothers were dressed to the "T" and the tables were beautifully decorated. Dozens of people came to show their support for the award recipients.

Betre Gizaw, president of BAC, says the event originated out of several discussions that members of BAC had concerning the often negative portrayal of Black and Latino women by both the media and hip-hop. The BAC believe that Black and Latino women have helped navigate a generation through a largely fatherless period and serve as the bedrock of the Diaspora's current familial structure; a major responsibility that deserves to be appreciated and recognized.



(R to L) Award winners Kat, Dean Petty and Alejandra proudly hold their Women of Distinction Awards • Photos courtesy of Brothers About Change

This year, the three following women recognized:

Dean Lula Petty-Edwards has been the director of the John D. O'Bryant African American Institute for over a decade. The Institute has been a vital component of the African American experience at Northeastern but despite the decision of the University to demolish the free-standing building and relocate it to the bottom floors of a new dormitory, Dean Petty has held her head

high making sure that the legacy and the history of the Institute continues to thrive.

Alejandra Lombardo, currently the interim director of the Latino Student Cultural Center (LSCC), has been the assistant director of the LSCC for nearly five years. Alejandra's magnetic personality has not only helped to attract students to the building itself, but to participate in the wide variety of programs offered. Her contributions has become an important element to the Latino experience at Northeastern University.

Kat Noel is a senior at Northeastern University and has been the editor-in-chief of the Onyx Informer for three years. Her tireless efforts in managing the Onyx has ensured that issues, ranging from political to cultural, that affect Black and Latino communities have been told to us by us. The importance of her dedication to keeping the NU community informed can not be overlooked.

The purpose of the event is to illustrate for the entire Northeastern community that the dedication of these honorees is what real Black and Latino women are about. The BAC wants to personally thank these women for their often unheralded contributions and selfless efforts to make the Black and Latino community stronger.

MY BIG FAT Latino Cultural Show

Courtesy of Sergio Marrero
and Paola Mesadieu



Members of the Hyde Square Task Force dance group, Ritmo en Acción, pose for a picture after their performance • Photo by Andres Olivo

Over 100 students gathered in the Curry Student Center Ballroom to witness the annual Latino Cultural Show. Guests at the March 16th event were both anxious and excited to see the production as they quickly made their way to their seats, bobbing their heads to the music that played in the background.

The show was centered around a student written and performed play about the impending marriage between a Puerto Rican Latina and an African American Muslim. This story captures how two individuals from very different backgrounds confront and overcome the biases and social barriers from their family and friends. This artistic work touched on the theme presented by Maya Angelou, "We are more alike than we are different."

The show also included wonderful dances by several Northeastern students and student groups NASO and BARKADA. The high school student group Ritmo en Accion from the Hyde Square Task Force also danced to everything from hip hop to salsa. One drummer was from the student organization UTSAV and the others were representing different areas of the Middle East. Powerful spoken word pieces were performed by Jeremiah Shepherd and Front Page. And to continue with the different art forms, there was an acoustic musical performance by singer Jesse and guitarist Grasshoppa.

Celebrating Mardi Gras NU STYLE

By Candice Springer

The President's Late Night Mardi Gras Breakfast was held on Tuesday, February 28, 2006. The event featured New Orleans' style food, live music, contests, games, souvenirs, and prizes.

Students flocked to the vibrantly decorated Stetson East dining hall. The hall was filled with a wide variety of colorful decorations and balloons. While waiting in line with intense anticipation, some students met up with friends, while others received pictures of themselves drawn by a caricaturist. President Freeland, standing at the entrance, happily greeted students as they were adorned with party masks and beaded necklaces.

As some students slowly eased over to tables of jambalaya, gumbo, sausages, cornbread, and pizza, others rushed to the colorful desert display filled with

pies, cakes, and festive pastries. When not devouring the tasty dishes, students listened to the jazzy sounds of the live band, watched the exciting cereal eating contest, or associated with friends while trying to snag as many freebies as possible. Northeastern's Hurricane Relief Committee, headed by senior criminal justice major Rosena Cornet, and Delta Phi Epsilon raised a total of \$990 which was matched by Student Affairs. By the end of the night everyone left with their bellies full and their faces plastered with smiles.

With the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, many were happy to see that Mardi Gras was able to live on in New Orleans. It showed the determination of Louisiana natives to survive through the tragedy. Northeastern's Mardi Gras Breakfast was like participating in a small version of that celebration. Being there and having a good time reminded us of the legacy of the authentic Mardi Gras, one that should not be forgotten during Louisiana's time of uncertainty.



An NU student dressed for the occasion collects donations for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.
• Photo by Craig Bailey

ROUNDTABLE: Where We Are, Where We're Going

The Round Table is an open, uncensored discussion of hot topics.

Join Onyx RoundTable editor Christine Williams and our RoundTable participants **Tiffany Malcolm, Taylor Cooper, and William Reese** as they discuss what honestly brought them to this university, what they see for the future and what they hope to change.

Christine Williams: So the title of this discussion is "Where We Are, Where We're Going." We're focusing on current issues on campus, issues that have faced the Diaspora on campus in the past, and what we hope for the future. I'd also like to know everyone's opinion on how the alumni and the faculty sometimes view us as being apathetic about issues on campus. Anyone have any opening statements?

Tiffany Malcolm: In terms of faculty saying students are being apathetic, I definitely agree. The more and more classes that come in, it seems like they're so disenfranchised from the Civil Rights movement and everything that happened – what it took for them to even get here, that no one cares anymore. I feel like we, the minority students in general, have become so complacent with everything.

CW: Yeah, I think complacent is definitely the right word. ...I wonder about next year's freshmen. The [class of] '11 are gonna have no idea about the Institute AND Mark is leaving, which is HUGE.

TM: Yea, I'm so upset.

Taylor Cooper: People tell me now, I wasn't here when there wasn't an Institute, and I wasn't there when it was going up. Why do you go there, why do you care? And I'm like, well someone was there, somebody that cared about me was there. I think why aren't YOU going is the real question. I can't believe people my age, the freshmen are like "I don't go there because I don't feel like going. I don't need to go around black people," for whatever reasons. Why would you not wanna go to places specifically for you? That doesn't make any sense – you runnin' from your own people."

TM: But I feel like wouldn't they want that connection? I mean I'm from the suburbs from an all white neighborhood and when I came here to school, I mean Northeastern said "diversity"

[Group Laughter]

TM: But then I came here and I realized it wasn't as diverse as I thought it was.

CW: So you're sayin' you feel like since it's not as diverse as you thought that you'd think people would appreciate the company [of other minorities on campus] a lot more?

TM: Yeah. I wanted to be in the city to see not only my people but other people. Do other people not feel the need to meet other people other than the same people they see around, the same people that will always be there?

CW: So what would you like to see on campus to address issues like this? Do you think that if we collectively made an effort to be unified that it would change a lot of the sentiment on campus?

TC: I think if we came together with the single-minded idea of having a purpose in common, and I'm not saying necessarily forming one big group, because honestly, as black folks we don't like each other or something—

[Group Laughter]

TC: Whatever the reason, I don't think one big student group would work. But as long as we come togeth-

er and decide as colored people on campus, our voices need to be heard collectively in order to get things done... Maybe next year that should be a goal of the clubs – to unify our focus and become productive toward a common goal. And it would take a long time...but if that happened, it would be a good thing.

TM: I don't mind the different groups on campus. I think that's great if you wanna go to HSU cuz you identify yourself as being Haitian or CSO – Caribbean or NASO - African. I think that's fine. Some of the groups are more socially based, which is fine too cuz you need to have fun and talk and chill and what not, but when things happen on this campus that are affecting you, we need to remember to step up and challenge faculty, and the people that are here. We pay them with our tuition money. When things



Tiffany

aren't going the way we'd like to see them, who's gonna advocate for us if we don't advocate for ourselves?

TC: For real.

CW: Well, we keep talking about the future. But are there any issues in the past that maybe -well, we may not necessarily know about but you (speaking to Will now) would know about? Building F, Mark leaving - these are our current issues. (To Will:) What were the issues during your first years here?

Will Reece: Well, I definitely think there are some issues that remained. A lot of us of have been here through issues that are still going on – issues that were here when I was a freshman...like diversity in the faculty and the unity issues we have. Some have gradually moved one way or the other but I think we definitely need to keep fighting as students to make sure those issues

are rectified. It's like Taylor was saying, I think it's very important to have a collective effort to bring some kind of collective consciousness to this campus.

CW: Does it scare any of you that Mark (Harvey) is leaving?

[Everyone in unison]: YES!

TC: When I first came as a pre-fresh to the Legacy overnight, [Mark] closed the doors and he was like 'Look, you made it this far but to keep going, you need to work your behinds off to find scholarships, to show that you are not ignorant black folk, and to keep going to this school. Cuz nobody's gonna give you anything in life from this point on.'And I was like dang, he really cares about us! Cuz when everyone else was like "Oh welcome to the school blah, blah, blah," he was like "Welcome to reality. Get on your grind." That's my man, that's cool peoples.

WR: I think it's very scary. I've known Mark since I was a freshman coming in 2002, and just to think that now he's not gonna be here, I think that's very scary for everybody that is still here. Cuz he was a force and he is a force at this school.

TM: True...

WR: He's been sort of the missing link at times. [The school] definitely could have used him more, in terms of reaching out more to minority students. And I really do think that since everyone always acknowledges that there's a lot that isn't the way it used to be, that Mark - I really feel like he had the power to bridge a lot of gaps. And I hope [the man they choose to replace him] is the right man...cuz it would be a shame to hire someone for the wrong reasons – simply because they were a minority and were male or any other reason other than them being there for the students.

ROUNDTABLE Where we are, Where we're Going.

TM: (to Will)
So what you're saying is that they should have the right mind-set?

WR:
Yeah, definitely the right mind-set. But they also have to be the

right person. They have

to have the right hopes and dreams for us as students, but they also have to be clear-headed and respectable.

CW: How do you guys feel about Northeastern's repeated disrespect for the minority opinion? For example, the whole history behind the Institute and how no one even really knew about Building F until they saw the Institute wasn't in the Master plan? And also how now they're basically doing the same thing to the LSCC?

TC: It bothers me. I remember hearing about that at a LASO meeting. How someone had seen the blueprints and all of a sudden the LSCC just wasn't there. No notice, nothing.

WR: It wasn't on the Master plan. And it's not a surprise... especially considering the Institute went through the same issue. And I think they're probably planning on rebuilding that whole block



Taylor

(Forsyth) as the campus gets bigger and... "better" in their opinion. I think in the future the LSCC probably won't be there. They'll tear that down and remodel. But the new question is then, where the new building would be. Cuz I'm pretty sure there'll be a new building but I would say it's all about the location.

TM: A new LSCC....or a new "Cultural" center? Like a "let's just throw 'em all together..."

CW: ...In a little box...

TM: Yeah, and the Institute's not on the tour. They don't point it out. They don't even say anything so I was just like okayyy... And then everybody kept bein' like "the Institute, the Institute" and I'm like what's the Institute??? Where is this place? And freshman-wise, it was all the way on the other side of campus! [Which is a shame] because of all its resources. It's important to know where you come from... to know your history.

CW: In terms of moving the LSCC or any other minority center for that matter, do you think it's purposeful that they put us in certain locations?

WR: I've heard the Institute used to be a Laundromat. But I've also heard it was an old factory...

TC: What the hell would that factory be making????

[Group Laughter]

WR: I have no idea. But you also have to realize back in the day, nothing was over there.

TM: So where was the campus originally?

Tiffany: I wonder if I knew everything that I know now, if I still would have gone to Northeastern.

WR: Like, over by the quad... Richards, all that. There was a parking lot over by where the Marino is.

TC:

Wow.

WR:

And there was - you know those 4 buildings? Dodge... Ell...

TC:

Ell...

WR:

Yeah, that was the

center of campus at one time. It

didn't venture out to West Village. There was no West Village. There wasn't much except some projects... oh wait I'm on tape, I mean uhhh, there was some "community housing..."

[Group Laughter]

WR: But

yeah, there used to be housing developments over there by Ruggles, and I think some houses too.

And then one day they kinda moved and everybody had to move out with

the whole gen—

[Everyone in unison]: gentrification.

TC: Dag.

WR: I mean and they've since changed that whole side of campus, but rumor has it, that's why they originally put the African American Institute over there...in that old factory/laundromat/whatever it used to be.

CW: You learn enough about the history here and it really makes you wonder. It

can't all be coincidence. Kat's even doing a whole separate piece on the Cultural centers...it goes that deep.

TM: I wonder if I knew everything that I know now, if I still would have gone to Northeastern. Do other schools have these issues??

WR: I would say the whole country got issues.

[Group Agreement and Laughter]

TM: Yeah, that's true.

WR: So you're gonna run into problems and issues everywhere. But I guess that still doesn't answer your question.

TC: And it's a good question.

TM: I guess it all has to do with race...and power. Either you have the upper-hand or you don't.

CW: And speaking of race, I think another current issue is not just recruitment but also retention... cuz it doesn't help us if we're accepting a low number of minorities and then losing half of them before they graduate. I wanna be able to walk around campus as a "minority" per say, but still feel like there are people walking around that look like me.

TC: Yea, even now people in my year (freshmen) are like "I don't like it here. I don't wanna stay here," just cuz of the race thing. I think I knew that comin' in though. I was like it's Boston...there may not be a lot of people that look like me.

[Group Laughter]

WR: I have to say, this is a little off topic, but I think we ALL heard rumors about Boston before we came here. I mean, I remember coming here my freshman year, and turning on the TV...and all the newscasters were white! And I remember starin' at the TV, changing the channels cuz in New York -

[CW, TM in unison]: New YORRRRK!

[Group Laughter]

TC: Whatever.

WR: [laughing] Yeah, but it was shocking cuz in New York, at least you always had the ONE black anchor and possible weatherman! And to this day, I think of that when I walk around campus.



Will

Taylor: "Our voices need to be heard collectively in order to get things done."

CW: So what brought all of you here...to Northeastern? I'll be honest. They gave a scholarship...and I took their money.

[Group Laughter]

TM: Well I just wanted to get away from the suburbs I was living in. I wanted to see different people, different things. And Boston is the college city. I thought maybe since Northeastern was in Boston it would be diverse. I'm not gonna lie, I came; my parents liked it. I thought the campus was nice. It was my number one. And for the most part I still like it. I'm gonna stay.

TC: I came because I was fortunate enough to find my passion early. I wanted to change the world through architecture so from then on whatever it took to get there, I knew I was gonna do it. I researched different schools, came across this one, found out about the co-op program, and I chose this was the best way to go. I accepted the fact that I was gonna be kinda lonely! [chuckling] I got over it...but that's cuz I have a goal in mind.

WR: That's good.

TC:

It's just unfortunate that so many people are stuck in the mindset of "Oh that's a white school they don't care about me, I'm not gonna go, I'm

not gonna do anything." No longer

is there the idea that I can work to change this place or I'm gonna make this work for me. Make it work for you cuz if everyone gets in their mind that they're gonna have a good time, a good time will be had.

CW: What about you, Will? You're awful quiet.

WR: [laughs] I have to be honest. - I never expected to go to Northeastern. I think it was my last - maybe my second to last choice. I had delusions of grandeur. I was watchin' the Cosby show, I saw Sandra go to Princeton, I was like I wanna go to Princeton.

[Group Laughter]

WR: I was into those brand name schools. And then I

had a friend that went here and told me to apply, so I did but then I forgot all about it. And then the thing came back and they gave me some money, and you know parents - they're eyes light up when they see money...and I didn't wanna stay in New York so when it came down to NYU and

Northeastern, I was like I guess it's

Boston! But then a little time passes and you're like hmmm, I didn't think about that as much as I should have....but I digressed.

[Group Chuckles]

TM: So you're saying if you had thought about it more, you wouldn't have gone here?

WR: I don't know if I could say where I would have gone, but I think I would have done a better job researching schools. But you know, we all make decisions for a

reason. And I can't knock Northeastern in a way because I'm grateful for the opportunities that they gave me. The academic programs are great...and we all make decisions for a reason.

TM: I

agree. Sometimes I think if I had thoroughly thought this through I wouldn't be here, but then again, you know what? It's not too bad. Like I said before, I like it.

TC: Personally, I like the struggle. I like the idea of people wanting me to fail or thinking this about me or thinking I won't make it. Cuz it makes me wanna prove them wrong.

CW: It's preparation for the real world.

TM: That's true.

TC: Like when Mark told me I was gonna have to do for me, I was like ooh for real? I got this. Watch me.

Taylor: It's unfortunate that so many people are stuck in the mindset of "Oh that's a white school —they don't care about me, I'm not gonna go, I'm not gonna do anything."

Christine: Does it scare any of you that Mark is leaving?

Untitled

With lips like honey, I wanted to create a sticky situation.

Hopefully adding to the mental masturbation...

I got off thinking bout the things we'd do in tight spaces.

While our faces went through phases

Bodies constantly changing places

I mean, shorty style was blazin

And the sex was so amazing...

At least in my mind...

We locked eyes for some time

While I searched to find...physical imperfections

Eyes blind while massaging her midsection

As I neared her section her muscles tensed then...

She sighed in relief as to release as I gently moved the sheets

Tryin to find what lied beneath

I parted the lips of her coral reef

She cooed as she caressed my cheek

Her essence leaked as she reached her peek

While my soldier prepared for hide and seek

I made attempts for sexual advances

While we exchanged passionate glances

Enraptured within each others arms as I lied in her bed.

Glancing...

Stuck in a trance from sexual thoughts that danced in my head.

Led by Asking...

For passage in hopes I'd be passing.

Creating orgasmic patterns filled with ecstasy and passion.

Lounging back laughing exhausted and gasping

My chest I was clasping, as she commenced the tongue lashin.

Vivid descriptions depicting the vision my mentality painted.

Gentle precision movements, left sighing before she almost fainted

Patiently waiting, as I contemplated forward motion.

Overwhelmed by emotions and anxious for her potion

My devotion to her ocean

Left me open somehow hoping

SOUL speech

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Thoughts passed about eloping

Still I left her crib moping...

For her mind was the only thing I'd been stroking

Distracted by recent passionate actions

Masking true affection, yet lackin

Knowledge of who's loving you

While slowly backing...

Out of commitment

For without consent

I had no choice but to be content

So I finally left...

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UNITY Week

Monday April 10th

"Global Food Tasting" hosted by BESS, XCel, HSU
6-9 pm in the Cabral Center (AAI)

Tuesday April 11th

"Creole 101" hosted by CVSA
4-5:30 pm in the Cabral Center (AAI)

"The African Extravaganza" hosted by NASO
6-9 pm in the Cabral Center (AAI)

Wednesday April 12th

"Carnival in the Commons" hosted by CSO
11:45 am - 1:25 pm in Centennial Commons

"How it All Began" Learn the Histories of the Black and
Latino student organizations
6-8 pm in the Cabral Center (AAI)

Thursday April 13th

"Drumming Lessons" hosted by CVSA
2:50 - 4:30 pm in the Cabral Center

"Unity Quilt Making" hosted by Sigma Gamma Rho and
Omega Psi Phi
5-9 pm in the Cabral Center (AAI) and Centennial
Commons

Friday April 14th

"Unity Barbeque Games"
4-6 pm in Centennial Commons

"An Evening of Elegance: The Spring Formal"
hosted by NBSA
8 pm - 12 am in the Cabral Center (AAI)

Saturday April 15th

"Commemorating the Legacy" hosted by the Institute
1-7 pm in the Cabral Center (AAI)

Ceremony followed by an after party from 8 pm- 1 am in the
Cabral Center

UNITY Week

**Celebrating the
Legacy of the
African American
Institute (AAI)**